

### **AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS**

The following listing of claims replaces all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the captioned patent application:

#### ***Listing of Claims:***

1. (Previously Presented) An external component of a cochlear implant hearing system, comprising:
  - a speech processor module comprising a housing, processing circuitry that receives signals output by a microphone, and one or more connectors; and
  - a protective case configured to interface with said one or more connectors;
  - wherein said speech processor unit is removably mountable within said case and operable while mounted therein.
2. (Previously Presented) The external component of claim 1, wherein said case comprises:
  - a base member; and
  - a cover member matable with said base member to form an enclosure,
  - wherein when said cover member and said base member are attached to each other, said case is at least resistant to fluid ingress.
3. (Previously Presented) The external component of claim 1, wherein said microphone is an internal microphone mounted on or within said housing of said speech processor module, and wherein said speech processor module is configured to receive signals output from said internal microphone.
4. (Previously Presented) The external component of claim 1, wherein said microphone is external to said speech processor module, and wherein said speech processor module is configured to receive and process signals output from said microphone external to said speech processor module.

5. (Previously Presented) The external component of claim 1, wherein said speech processor module is configured to be operably connected to a power supply.
6. (Previously Presented) The external component of claim 5, wherein said one or more connectors comprise electrical pin connectors, and wherein said protective case is configured to facilitate an electrical interface between said pin connectors with said power supply.
7. (Previously Presented) The external component of claim 1, wherein said case is adapted to prevent all fluid ingress when said cover member is closed relative to said base member.
8. (Previously Presented) The external component of claim 1, wherein said case is adapted to at least substantially prevent dust ingress when said cover member and said base member are mated to each other.
9. (Previously Presented) The external component of claim 2, wherein said case further comprises:  
a sheath with a gasket around the perimeter thereof that overlies said speech processor module when said speech processor module is mounted in said base member, wherein said gasket and sheath, when in position, can seal with a perimeter wall of said base member.
10. (Withdrawn) A protective case for a speech processor unit of a hearing prosthesis, comprising:  
a base member for removably receiving a dual-mode speech processor module, said speech processor module having one or more connectors; and  
a cover member adapted to mate with said base member to form said protective case, wherein said base member or said cover member is configured to interface with said one or more connectors of said speech processor module.
11. (Withdrawn) The protective case of claim 10, wherein when the cover member is closed relative to the base member, the case can be at least resistant to fluid ingress.

12. (Withdrawn) The protective case of claim 10, wherein said case is adapted to prevent fluid ingress when said cover member is closed relative to said base member.

13. (Withdrawn) The protective case of claim 12, wherein said case is adapted to at least substantially prevent dust ingress when the cover member is closed relative to the base member.

14. (Withdrawn) A speech processor module comprising:

a self-contained housing;

wherein said speech processor module is configured to interface with a first set of one or more components to provide a stand-alone behind-the-ear (BTE) speech processing unit; and

wherein said speech processor module is further configured to interface with a second set of one or more components to provide a body-worn speech processing unit.

15. (Withdrawn) The speech processor module of claim 14, wherein said second set of components comprises a case that protects said speech processor module from environmental conditions which can damage said speech processor module.

16. (Withdrawn) The speech processor module of claim 14, comprising:

an operational mode controller configured to select functional components internal to said speech processor module or functional components implemented in an external component system other than said speech processor module based on whether said speech processor module is to be implemented as a stand-alone BTE speech processing unit or as a component of a body-worn speech processing unit.

17. (Withdrawn) The speech processor module of claim 16, where said operational mode controller is configured to determine an operational mode of said speech processor based on an identifying feature of a power supply connected to said speech processor module.

18. (Withdrawn) A speech processor module configured to be implemented in more than one mode of operation including a stand-alone speech processing mode, and a body-worn speech processing mode, comprising:

an operational selector configured to select the operational mode of said speech processor module; and

a user controls selector to select the applicable user controls based on the determination of said operational mode selector.

19. (Previously Presented) The external component of claim 1, wherein said one or more connectors comprise a cable connector for receiving a cable, and wherein said case comprises a grommet sealed orifice configured to interface with said cable inserted in said cable connector.